

**Lieutenant Governor
Joseph E. Kernan, Director**
INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
ONE NORTH CAPITOL, SUITE 700
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204
TEL 317 232 8800
www.indianacommerce.com

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Media Contact: Jeff Harris, Ind. Dept. of Commerce, 317.232.2464
Dustin White, Commerce Region 12, 812.941.2117
Jody Peacock, Ports of Indiana, 317.435.1532
Dennis Balla, General Mgr., Kastle Steel Corp., 810.919.3593

Kasle Steel Brings New Facility, Jobs to Jeffersonville Port

JEFFERSONVILLE — Lt. Governor Joe Kernan today welcomed Kasle Metal Processing, LLC to Jeffersonville's Port of Indiana-Clark Maritime Center, bringing the port its 14th steel-related business.

Investing \$16 million in a new 130,000 square-foot processing facility to be located at 5146 Maritime Road, the plant will be a joint venture between Kasle Steel Corp. and Automatic Feed Co. Company officials expect to create 81 production, clerical, maintenance and management jobs by 2004.

"We're excited to welcome Kasle Steel to Jeffersonville and to Indiana," said Lt. Gov. Joe Kernan, director of the Indiana Department of Commerce. "As we work to grow and diversify our economy, utilizing our port system as an economic development tool is critical – and today's announcement is a perfect example of that. We are proud of the partnership that brought this company and these jobs to our state and we look forward to a long and fruitful relationship with Kasle."

The new facility will produce first operation-configured blanks from cold rolled steel coils, which are primarily used in the automotive industry for the bodies of cars and trucks. Kasle's customers include Ford Motor Co.'s Louisville truck plant and TWB Co. in Columbus, Ohio.

"This is another great win for our community and our region," said Jeffersonville Mayor Thomas R. Galligan. "This type of economic development is very important on many levels, and it's another example of how we have been able to form an unbeatable partnership between local, state and port officials."

Headquartered in Dearborn, Mich., Kasle Steel Corp. was founded as a "steel service center" business in 1922. Today, Kasle, a provider of blanking, cut-to-length, and pickling services for the automotive and steel industries, processes about 2 million tons of steel each year and employs more than 600 workers at its Michigan facilities in Dearborn, Woodhaven, Flint, and Lansing, as well as in Canada.

Automatic Feed Co. is headquartered in Napoleon, Ohio and was founded in 1949. The company is a premier designer and manufacturer of press feeding, coil processing, sheet handling automation equipment and software for the automotive industry. The company has 140 employees in Napoleon and Wauseon, Ohio.

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“We’ve spent a considerable amount of time analyzing the best location for our new plant,” said Michael Limauro, president and chief executive officer of Kasle Steel Corp. “We believe this location provides the best opportunity for us to develop and grow our business in the long run.”

Kim Beck, president of Automatic Feed Co. added, “This is an opportunity we have envisioned several times in the past. The mutual respect we have developed working with Kasle Steel Corp. over the past 30 years serves as a base for our company’s first entry into steel processing. We believe Kasle’s operational abilities, along with our leadership in equipment technology combine for a great synergy. We are also able to serve many of our existing customers in a new manner with this joint venture.”

Commissioners for the Ports of Indiana unanimously approved the final lease agreement for Kasle Metal Processing in its public meeting today held at the Port of Indiana-Southwind Maritime Center in Mount Vernon, Ind.

“Kasle is a good fit for our port,” said Steven Stemler, commissioner for the Ports of Indiana. “This is the third steel-related company to locate here in the last year and it further establishes Clark as the steel campus of the Midwest. There are tremendous synergies and economic advantages in having 14 steel-related companies at one location.”

Through a coordinated incentive package offered by the Department of Commerce, the Ports of Indiana and the city of Jeffersonville, Indiana secured the Kasle project over Louisville.

Commerce offered the company up to \$700,000 in EDGE (Economic Development for a Growing Economy) tax credits and a \$47,500 training grant from the Skills Enhancement Fund. Commerce also awarded the city of Jeffersonville up to \$250,000 from its Industrial Development Grant Fund, an amount the city will match. The city of Jeffersonville offered the company 10-year real and personal property tax abatements, totaling \$1,385,935.

“Indiana offers so many assets to growing companies,” said Ed McCallum, senior partner of McCallum Sweeney Consulting, the international site selection company assisting Kasle. “A central location, educated workforce and developed transportation infrastructure. The final site selection for Kasle was a comprehensive process and this situation proved to be in the company’s best interest.”

The Indiana Department of Commerce awards Skills Enhancement Funds to Indiana companies that undertake capital-investment projects. The grants help defray the costs of training new and current employees in transferable and company-specific skills necessary to support these projects. EDGE tax credits are based on the creation of new Hoosier jobs and are awarded to companies that may otherwise locate in another state or country. The Industrial Development Grant Fund provides assistance to local units of government for off-site infrastructure projects in support of new business development.

The Ports of Indiana operates a statewide system of ports, foreign-trade zones and economic development programs under the authority of the Indiana Port Commission – a seven-member bipartisan board appointed by the governor. Indiana’s public ports include the Port of Indiana-Clark Maritime Center (Jeffersonville) and the Port of Indiana-Southwind Maritime Center (Mount Vernon), both located on the Ohio River, and the Port of Indiana-Burns Harbor (Portage) on Lake Michigan. For more information, visit www.portsofindiana.com.

For more information on this project, or other state economic development programs, businesses should contact their regional Indiana Department of Commerce office at 800.463.8081 or visit the web site at www.indianacommerce.com

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